

PUNCTUATION MARKS USAGE AND EXERCISES

What is a punctuation mark?

A mark, such as a full stop, comma, or question mark, used in writing to separate sentences and their elements and to clarify meaning.

Punctuation is as important or rather a little more important than the words you use, the way you structure your sentences, and the content you are trying to convey. The term ‘punctuation’ refers to the system that allows a writer to let the audience know where the sentences end, where there is a short pause or a long pause, and also to show if the writer is questioning, explaining or providing some extra information. Since the writer is not directly speaking to the audience, punctuation is the only way to make the reader see it the way the author put it. Punctuation, according to the Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, is defined as “the marks used in writing that divide sentences and phrases; the system of using these marks.” The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines punctuation as “the act or practice of inserting standardized marks or signs in written matter to clarify the meaning and separate structural units.” According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the term ‘punctuation’ is defined as “(the use of) special symbols that you add to writing to separate phrases and sentences to show that something is a question, etc.”, and “punctuation is the use of symbols such as full stops or periods, commas, or question marks to divide written words into sentences and clauses”, according to the Collins Dictionary.

The Punctuation Marks in English Grammar

In English grammar, there are multiple punctuation marks that are used in order to make your writing look sensible and easy to understand. A punctuation mark is defined as “a sign or mark used in writing to divide sentences and phrases”, according to the Oxford Learner’s Dictionary. Let us take a look at the various punctuation marks in English grammar.

- Period/Full stop
- Comma
- Colon
- Semicolon
- Apostrophe
- Quotation marks
- Hyphen
- Dash
- Parentheses
- Slash
- Exclamation mark
- Question mark
- Ellipsis

Furthermore, it is also important you understand that using capital letters and spaces are also an integral part of punctuation.

Following is the chart that contains all the symbols of the mark.



Following table helps you understand the use of punctuation marks

Punctuation Mark	Usage	Examples
Period (.)	Used to mark the end of a declarative sentence or to indicate an abbreviation.	1. She went to the store. 2. The U.S.A. is a country in North America.
Comma (,)	Used to separate items in a list, join independent clauses in a compound sentence, or set off introductory elements.	1. I need to buy apples, oranges, and bananas. 2. She studied hard, yet she still failed the exam.
Question Mark (?)	Used to indicate the end of a direct question.	1. Where are you going? 2. Did you finish your homework?
Exclamation Mark (!)	Used to indicate strong emotion, emphasis, or surprise.	1. Stop! 2. What a beautiful sunset!

Colon (:))	Used to introduce a list, explanation, or quotation.	1. Please bring the following items: paper, pens, and markers. 2. He had one goal: to win the race.
Semicolon (;)	Used to join independent clauses in a compound sentence or to separate items in a list when the items contain commas.	1. She finished her work; then she went home. 2. They visited Paris, France; Rome, Italy; and Madrid, Spain.
Quotation Marks ("")	Used to enclose the exact words spoken by someone in direct speech or to indicate titles of shorter works like articles or poems.	1. "I'll see you tomorrow," said John. 2. She read the article titled "The Importance of Exercise."
Apostrophe ('))	Used to indicate possession, to form contractions, or to show the omission of letters in a word.	1. That is Mary's book. 2. It's raining outside.
Dash (—)	Used to indicate a sudden break or change in thought, to set off parenthetical elements, or to introduce a list or explanation.	1. She ran — fast! 2. My sister — the youngest one — is very talented.
Ellipsis (...)	Used to indicate the omission of words in a quotation or to suggest a pause or trailing off in thought.	1. "I don't know... maybe we should go." 2. "The best is yet to come..."

Following table helps you understand the use of punctuation marks in the direct and indirect speech.

Direct Speech Punctuation	
Use quotation marks to enclose the exact words spoken by the speaker.	
Begin the quoted speech with a capital letter.	
Use a comma, period, question mark, or exclamation mark inside the closing quotation mark, depending on the structure of the sentence.	
If the speaker's words are split by a speech tag (e.g., "said," "asked"), use a comma before the closing quotation mark, and lowercase the first letter of the speech tag.	
Example Direct Speech: "I love pizza," said Salman.	
Indirect Speech Punctuation	
Do not use quotation marks for indirect speech.	
Use a reporting verb (e.g., said, asked, told) to introduce the reported speech.	
Use a comma or other appropriate punctuation to separate the reporting verb from the reported speech.	
Change the tense of the verbs in the reported speech as needed to match the context of the reporting verb.	
Example Indirect Speech: Salman said that she loved pizza.	

Direct speech involves quoting the exact words spoken by someone, while indirect speech reports what someone said without quoting their exact words. Proper punctuation is essential to indicate when direct or indirect speech is being used. Punctuation is used in direct speech to separate spoken words, or dialogue, from the rest of a story. The words spoken by a character sit inside speech marks:

“Did you hear that noise?” whispered Sam.

Speech marks are sometimes known as inverted commas or quotation marks.

Some writers use double speech marks and some use single speech marks. You can use either type as long as you are consistent - it's important not to swap between the two.

Remember to open - and close - the speech marks at the start - and end - of the direct speech:

“I think there is something moving in the bushes,” George said.

Write out these sentences with the speech marks in the correct place

1. I can't wait for my birthday party! exclaimed Matthew.
2. What time does the film start? asked Amelia.
3. To get to the art gallery, you need to take the next left and then turn right, the tour guide explained.

Exercise: Punctuation Practice

Directions: Fill in the blanks with the appropriate punctuation marks. Choose from the following options: period (.), comma (,), question mark (?), exclamation mark (!), colon (:), semicolon (;), quotation marks (" "), apostrophe ('), dash (—), or ellipsis (...).

1. The party was a great success everyone had a fantastic time
2. What time is it I forgot to bring my watch
3. He shouted stop to the thief
4. I'll be waiting for you by the fountain at six o'clock
5. She said I can't believe it's already Friday
6. The dog's tail wagged excitedly as it greeted its owner
7. We need to buy apples oranges bananas and grapes
8. The assignment is due tomorrow I haven't started it yet
9. The sun sets beautifully over the horizon
10. "I'm sorry," she whispered, tears in her eyes, "I didn't mean to hurt your feelings."

Take your time to carefully punctuate each sentence. Check your answers afterward to see if you've used the correct punctuation marks.

Exercise: Punctuation Practice

Work in pair. Place semicolons, hyphens, quotation marks, commas, question marks, and apostrophe wherever they are needed in the following sentences.

1. Samina's grades will hinge upon her active participation in-class compositions and project contributions.

2. Several people participated in the annual meeting Mr Zia Somro Ms Shehnaila Raza Mr Rakesh Behl the chief accountant and Dr. Ghulam Haider
3. Expressing her concern Maria's aunt Mrs. Khan lamented I don't think Maria likes me very much. Every time I pick her up she cries. Why should I even bother?
4. Well documented case notes are essential in court proceedings.
5. While I was talking to Mr. and Mrs. Raza Zara screamed Why doesn't anyone ever listen to me
6. Maryam's friends skipped college on December 12 2013 so she did too.
7. Sameer must attend career counseling find steady employment and secure a well reputed employment in order to meet the requirements of the family service plan.
8. Tehseen however had gone out to the club to play snooker.
9. Over the mantelpiece there was a picture of a horse race with three fallen horses a stuffed owl in a glass case a grimy mirror with a crack in one corner and some rather dirty horse brasses.
10. Presently the autumn season is upon us, marked by the rapid descent of leaves

EXERCISE: PUNCTUATION PRACTICE:

Read the following article on AI and Healthcare. Spot and rectify the errors in punctuation marks. Then compare your answers with your pair.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in healthcare is a game changer revolutionizing patient care and medical practices, Its impact spans diverse areas from diagnostic imaging to personalized treatment plans AI is reshaping the landscape of modern medicine. 'Artificial intelligence will be one of the most transformative and disruptive technologies in human history. - Sundar Pichai ; CEO of Google.

One of its remarkable feats is the analysis of medical images, aiding in early disease detection such as cancer this capability can potentially save countless lives.

Moreover: facilitating timely interventions AI-driven predictive analytics algorithms are forecasting disease outbreaks and identifying high risk patients. Additionally AI;powered chatbots and virtual assistants are enhancing patient engagement providing round the clock support and offering personalized health recommendations However- the integration of AI into healthcare necessitates careful consideration of ethical and privacy concerns maintaining transparency in AI decision-making processes and ensuring the security of patient data are paramount.

In essence: AI's transformative potential in healthcare is undeniable promising a future of improved outcomes and enhanced patient experiences. The pace of progress in artificial intelligence is incredibly fast. It is growing at a pace close to exponential." - Elon Musk- Space X

Exercise: Punctuation Rewrite

Directions: Rewrite each sentence below, adding the appropriate punctuation marks.

1. She is going to the party she will be late
2. did you finish your homework
3. She enjoyed a variety of hobbies including reading, painting, and gardening.
4. the sun is shining brightly it's a beautiful day

5. i want to visit london paris rome and Madrid
6. The author started her speech with a famous quote "To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment."
7. the book is on the table john said it's his favorite
8. The supervisor always emphasized the importance of one crucial trait that is integrity.
9. They faced various obstacles during their expedition dense forests, treacherous rivers, and steep mountains.
10. The commencement speech opened with a memorable line:"Your time is limited, don't waste it living someone else's life."